THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI H.R. BHARDWAJ): (a) and (b) As per the directions of the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India in the Salem Advocates Bar Association vs. Union of India, the Government of India had constituted a Task Force to examine the feasibility of Judicial impact in India, under the Chairmanship of Shri Justice M. Jagannadha Rao, Retired Judge of the Supreme Court. The Task Force submitted its report on 15th June, 2008. The Central Government has sought the views of all the State Governments and all the High Courts on this report.

Amendment to Hindu Succession Act

229. SHRI S. ANBALAGAN: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal to bring amendment to Hindu Succession Act to the effect that sons and daughters have equal share in the assets created by the father/parents in case of son's/sons' inheriting father's/mother's business of father/mother's employment or getting his job by virtue of his father/mother's employment in a factory etc., as the sons are getting double benefits of both the employment and assets now;

(b) if so, the details thereof and by when the same is proposed to be brought before the Parliament; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI H.R. BHARDWAJ): (a) The Hindu Succession Act was amended by the Hindu Succession (Amendment) Act, 2005 to provide for the equal share to a coparcener daughter in a joint Hindu property. At present there is no other proposal under consideration for amending the said Act.

Probe into corruption charges against Judges

230. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Judiciary has failed, so far, to set up a procedure of its own, for probing corruption/allegations against the Judges, as has been done in other countries like USA and Canada;

(b) whether the Prime Minister is reported to have made a statement that there is high corruption in the Judiciary;

(c) if so, whether Government has decided to constitute a National Judicial Commission, so as to allow the common people to file complaints against corrupt Judges; and

(d) if so, by when the proposed NJC, which forms a part of the Judges (Inquiry) Bill, is likely to start functioning?

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI H.R. BHARDWAJ): (a) to (d) The issue of Judicial Accountability was discussed at the Conference of Chief Justices held in 1990 and no the basis of the broad consensus emerging out of the deliberations, the Chief Justice of India summed up the position as follows:

"The Chief Justice of the High Court has the competence to receive complaints against the conduct of the Judges of his court and when he receives any he would look into it for finding out if it deserves to be closely looked into. Where he is satisfied that the matter requires to be examined, he shall have facts ascertained in such manner as he considers appropriate keeping the nature of allegations in view and if he is of the opinion that the matter is such that it should be reported to the Chief Justice of India, he shall do so.

The Chief Justice of India shall act in a similar manner in regard to complaints relating to conduct of Judges of the Supreme Court and in regard to conduct of Chief Justices of the High Courts. On the basis of the facts ascertained, the Chief Justice of the High Court or the Supreme Court, as the case may be, shall take such appropriate action as may be considered proper, keeping the interests of the Judiciary as the paramount consideration."

The complaints received against the Judges of the Supreme Court and the High Courts are, at present, dealt with as per the above 'In House' procedure.

Prime Minister, in one of his speeches delivered at the Conference of Chief Ministers and Chief Justices held in April 2008, made a mention about the challenge of corruption *inter-alia* faced by the judiciary.

Government had introduced The Judges (Inquiry) Bill, 2006 in the Parliament on 19.12.2006 with a view to setting up of a National Judicial Council to deal with the complaints against Judges of the Supreme Court and High Courts. The Bill was referred to the Department Related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances and Law and Justice. The Committee has since submitted its report which has been examined. The Government proposes to withdraw the Judges (Inquiry) Bill, 2006 introduce another Bill in its place during the current session of the Parliament. The fresh Bill proposed to be introduced has been drafted after incorporating a number of recommendations made by the Standing Committee.

Functioning of Lok Adalats

231. SHRI NANDI YELLAIAH: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that permanent Lok Adalats for public utility services are functioning in Andhra Pradesh, under the Chairmanship of District Judge and two members, appointed from among retired experienced officers of respective services, with cases being settled very fast and the awards are not appealable;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the reasons for not establishing permanent Lok Adalats in every district of Andhra Pradesh and not establishing them in other States;

(d) whether public services like domestic gas, civil supplies items, Income Tax, Sales Tax and general commodities could be brought under permanent Lok Adalats; and